421 /963/ They not only acknowledge that material goods have a definite owner who has sole right of disposal, but they also apply this acknowledgment to specific relationships between individuals. Accordingly, children belong to both of their own parents as their property, and one spouse has an actual right to the other. Step-parents have similar rights to children who have only one parent or are completely orphaned. We shall soon discuss the fact that certain groups have a definite title of possession for sections of land marked off with boundaries.

The social order of the Yamana recognizes two types of property, namely, common possessions and personal property. The former is based on the absolute necessity of hunting and the roving mode of life. Since everyone, or rather the individual family, is thrown back on its own resources for a considerable time, it is also the sole, unrestricted master of everything it carries along, and it disposes of this quite freely. This distribution of possessions is natural; we come across it not only among all three Fuegians tribes, but quite generally among peoples with a low gathering economy.

It would be a mistake to regard the common property as a communistic form of possession, for the individual person only has the usufruct of it under certain conditions. In like manner it would be incorrect to explain along these lines the obligation of mutual aid which is emphasized to a remarkable degree among the Yamana (379). Voluntary distribution of possessions in the form of

379. Hyades (q):243 opposed such an obviously false interpretation: "They like to share what they have with those around them, and one cannot say that this is because of the community of property. This community does not exist in Fuegia" /translated from French/.

booty and tools occurs as a result of social considerations, but leaves completely untouched the right of disposal itself.

1. Common Property

186 The consciousness of ethnic unity is very pronounced among 423 our Yamana, as among all primitive peoples. It is based on identity

/968 cont./

422 himself to use in making things also belong to him, such as sticks for shafts, tendons for cords, and the rib bones of whales for spear points. Finally /969/ his property consists of such objects as he has made for barter and which he saves for a suitable opportunity. His dogs and the live birds that he has caught and kept with him must not be forgotten. A Yamana man finds these few and very simple earthly goods sufficient for his way of life and his happiness.

The woman is not much richer. She does, however, own a greater number of smaller objects, whereas the man has a few substantial pieces which he calls his own. Her belongings consist of what she needs to cover and to ornament her body, furthermore a small basket or so in which she keeps small artifacts, such as fishhooks, fire implements, pouch for pigments, knife, scraper, strap, etc., and finally the mussel breaker and the long crab fork, although these two articles were made by her husband. Nowadays she also carries from one place to another the tin dishes, cloth garments, and all kinds of trifles that she obtains from the Whites.

[858] From its early years the child, like its father and mother, disposes of his own possessions, which include clothing and ornaments, playthings, and all the tame animals that were given to him for his amusement. There is no lack of examples from olden and modern times which clearly show that even the parents do not consider themselves entitled to dispose of some article belonging to the child without his consent (384).

384. Relying on several written sources, Cooper:179 comes to the conclusion that "women and children have well recognized property rights" /cited in English/. -- The same conditions hold no less strictly for children's right of ownership among the Selk'nam (Vol. I, 432) and the Halakwulup.

[171]

It follows naturally from this segregation of goods that no one may arbitrarily dispose of something that belongs to another. Whenever Europeans wanted to trade for some object and approached the wrong person about it, they were always referred to the real owner. Fitz-Roy (a):76, 237 definitely became acquainted with

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

Among the Yahgan, marriage by capture seems to have been less common than among the Ona. A woman given in marriage by her father against her will soon abandoned the undesired husband. In fact the Yahgan showed a tendency to change husbands and wives not infrequently, which we may term progressive polygamy. According to Rev. Thomas Bridges (1884, p. 206) a man might have from one to four wives at a time, but the number was not fixed by custom.

Infidelity resulted in no fixed form of punishment, but both the offending man and woman were apt to be beaten. Shortly before our arrival a Yahgan man had disappeared. It was rumored that his wife, enraged at his amours, had beaten him with a paddle and accidentally killed him.

Children

In the old days, to judge by the number of deserted orphans set down in the mission records, the Yahgan did not greatly devote themselves to the care of the children. Abortion seems to have been a common practice, and infanticide we judge was not rare. To reach the facts is somewhat difficult because early explorers did not have sufficient knowledge to describe such practices, and the mission contact soon put an end to them or drove them under cover.

Soon after birth had taken place the Yahgan mother bathed in the sea and the new-born child was also immersed in order to toughen it. This was a rather terrible ordeal for an infant, for the sea temperatures of winter and summer range from 40° to 50° Fahrenheit, while the air at best could be described as no warmer than temperate. We have no figures to show what mortality this custom entailed, yet cannot but believe that soon after birth all but the most vigorous and robust infants were thus ruthlessly eliminated.

After delivery, not only the mother but the father as well was expected to rest for a week or more. In this custom we see incipient couvade.

Games and Amusements

The Yahgan to pass the time indulged in various simple games and in singing and dancing. Of necessity the young boys devoted much care and time to practice with spear, bow and arrow, sling, and stones; but while these exercises often assumed the form of